

Ornithological Literature

Edited by Sara R. Morris

THE PURPLE MARTIN. By Robin Doughty and Rob Fergus. Univ. of Texas Press, Austin, 2002: 128 pp., 16 color and 4 black-and-white figures including 4 maps, 6 tables. \$19.95 (hardcover).—The Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) has the distinction of being both the largest swallow in the world and the only bird that has become almost completely dependent upon human-built nesting structures over a large portion of its range. This easy-to-read book is a popular account of martin biology, with a heavy emphasis on the art and lore of human interaction with the species. After a short introduction, the authors provide two brief chapters on taxonomy and range. The former gives an overview of all seven martin species of the Western Hemisphere, with comments on species relationships. The chapter on migration and range covers breeding sites and migration routes and timing for each of the currently recognized subspecies, although more detailed data on the winter grounds is held back until a later chapter.

There follow two longer chapters of a more “popular” nature: one on the history of the human-martin relationship and the other on some generalities of bird conservation as they apply to the species. The latter includes such varied subjects as the economic value of martins and martin-inspired literature. The next and largest chapter is probably the most valuable resource in the book. It consists of an overview of martin biology, from nest-building and caring of young, through fall migration and wintering ecology, to the return of scouts the following spring. It includes detailed tables of nesting development, predators and parasites, prey items, migration recoveries, and vocalizations. Also presented are discussions of foraging behavior and physiology, making this chapter essentially a miniature version of a species account from *The birds of North America* series.

The final two chapters return to the subject of martins in the realm of humanity. The first is devoted to an overview of the several or-

ganizations that are wholly or in part devoted to Purple Martin conservation, while the second discusses the constantly evolving tactics that “landlords” are using to promote the species. The latter is of greatest use to those who wish to attract their own colonies of these birds. The book ends with a list of additional references, thus making it a generally useful publication for anyone interested in Purple Martins, with an emphasis on those among us with a vested interest in maintaining populations of North America’s largest swallow.—
PAMELA D. HUNT.

HYBRID DUCKS: THE 5TH CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS AN INVENTORY. By Eric and Barry Gilham. Privately published by B. L. Gilham, 90 Church Rd., West Row, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 8PF, United Kingdom. 2002: 64 pp., 95 full color photographs. £17.00 + £2.50 postage and handling to North America.—The authors have produced their second compendium of hybrid waterfowl, supplementing their *Hybrid ducks* publication of 1996 and the Bulletin updates published in 1998, 1999, and 2000. To date, their checklist consists of 220 hybrid combinations believed to be first generation crosses. Five hybrids are described for the first time, while new facts are included for some of the other 215 hybrid combinations that were described previously. All of the color photographs are new and they depict 80 different hybrids, including some examples of eclipse plumages and backcrosses.

The accounts for most hybrid combinations tend to be very brief summaries of published and unpublished records, museum specimens, published and unpublished illustrations, similar forms, and references. Detailed descriptions for most of these hybrids are found in the earlier publications or the cited literature. More comprehensive descriptions are provided for the newly described combinations and for those hybrids with significant new sources